

# *Discovering Language Arts*

## *Introduction to Research*

### Teacher's Guide

**Grade Level:** K-2

**Curriculum Focus:** Language Arts

**Lesson Duration:** One class period

### **Program Description**

**Generating Questions: Working Dogs** (3 min.) – One way writers can plan what they want to research is by writing a list of questions they want to find answers for.

**Researching: A Dog History** (4 min.) – A writer can conduct research on a topic by reading books, searching the Internet, and observing a subject directly.

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### **Onscreen Questions**

- What do you want to know about dogs? Write two questions you want to research to learn more about dogs.
  - What is your favorite animal? Use computers and books to learn about your favorite animal.
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### **Lesson Plan**

#### *Student Objectives*

- Understand that observation is a good way to conduct research.
- Understand that reading books is a good way to conduct research.
- Use their reading and observation skills to conduct research about plants.

#### *Materials*

- *Introduction to Research* video
- One or two picture books about plants
- Three or four different kinds of potted plants

#### *Procedures*

1. Watch *Introduction to Research* with the class and talk about the different ways to research a topic before writing about it. What did you learn about dogs by using your eyes and ears? What kind of information do you think books would tell you about dogs?

2. Tell students they are going to be using the skills they learned from *Introduction to Research* to learn more about plants. Talk about some of the things students already know about plants. Then develop a class list of questions students have about plants. Write the title "Plant Research" on a large piece of chart paper, then divide it into two columns and label these columns "Research Questions" and "New Information." Write questions the students have about plants beneath the "Research Questions" header and keep it at the front of the room so that students can see their questions.
3. Read through one or two picture books about plants, paying close attention to any words or illustrations that might help answer some of the questions on the class list. After reading through each book, discuss the text and illustrations. What new information did we learn about plants from this book? Show some of the illustrations from the book again and talk about the information about plants that students can learn by studying the pictures. What is happening in the picture? What does this illustration tell us about plants?
4. Refer to the list of questions the class initially created and see if students can answer any of these questions from the information they learned in the books. Write any answers or other new information they have learned beneath the "New Information" header on the chart paper.
5. Tell the class they are now going to use their eyes and sense of touch to conduct observational research about plants. Show the students the potted plants you have brought. If the plants are small and light, have students pass them around to study them. If not, have students approach the plants a few at a time so that they can get a better look. Allow students to gently and carefully touch the leaves or flowers of the plant and the soil in the pot. Ask questions while students are observing the plants. What do all the plants have in common? What are some things that are unique about each plant? What color are the leaves? What do the flowers look like? What kind of environment do plants seem to need to grow properly?
6. After students have carefully observed the plants, return to the list of questions and information on the chart paper. Can students answer any of their earlier questions based on what they have observed? Add any answers and new information to the "New Information" list on the chart paper.
7. After they have completed their "New Information" lists, remind students that writing when about a topic it is necessary to research it. Sometimes it is helpful to make a list of research questions, just as they did about plants. Reading books and using your eyes and ears to observe are two good ways to conduct prewriting research. Read through the list of questions and the new information that they learned about plants. Ask students to share what they learned about the research process and have them discuss some of the things they found most interesting about their plant research.

## Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class discussions, generated more than three questions and/or pieces of new information for the class lists, carefully observed the potted plants without damaging them and required no supervision while doing so, and demonstrated a solid understanding that reading books and observing something are good ways to conduct research.

- **2 points:** Students generally engaged in class discussions, generated at least two questions or pieces of new information for the class lists, observed the potted plants without damaging them and required little supervision while doing so, and demonstrated a basic understanding that reading books and observing something are good ways to conduct prewriting research.
- **1 point:** Students participated minimally in group discussions, generated one or no questions or pieces of new information for the class lists, damaged the potted plants or were unable to observe the potted plants without constant supervision, and were unable to demonstrate a solid understanding that reading books and observing something are good ways to conduct research.

## Vocabulary

### information

*Definition:* A collection of facts or data; knowledge obtained from study, experience, or instruction

*Context:* Doing research or gathering information on a topic helps a writer write an interesting story.

### observe

*Definition:* To watch attentively

*Context:* When we observe these dogs, we learn that dogs love to run and get exercise.

### research

*Definition:* Close, careful study; scholarly or scientific observation or study

*Context:* When you want to learn more about a topic, such as dogs, you have to do research.

### topic

*Definition:* The subject of a speech, essay, thesis, or discourse

*Context:* Reading books is a great way to learn about a topic.

## Academic Standards

### Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit [www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp](http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp).

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Language Arts – Writing: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

- Language Arts – Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
- Language Arts – Listening and Speaking: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

### **The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)**

The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association have developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching English language arts. To view the standards online, go to [www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm](http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm).

This lesson plan addresses the following English standards:

- Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience
  - Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge
  - Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities
  - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information)
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### **Support Materials**

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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### **DVD Content**

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

### ***How to Use the DVD***

The DVD starting screen has the following options:



**Play Video** – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

**Video Index** – Here the video is divided into sections indicated by video thumbnail icons; brief descriptions are noted for each one. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

**Curriculum Units** – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

**Standards Link** – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

**Teacher Resources** – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

## Video Index

### I. Asking Questions

Students decide what they want to research by making a list of questions.

### II. Research Skills

Students learn how to use books, the Internet, and observation skills to research the history of dogs.

## Curriculum Units

### 1. Creating Research Questions

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What are some things you know about guide dogs and other working dogs?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What are some other topics you would like to research?

A: Answers will vary.

## **2. Conducting Research**

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What are some ways you learn about the world around you?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What are three ways to conduct research?

A: You can conduct research by reading books, searching the Internet, and by using your own eyes and ears to observe things about a subject you are researching.